

he freed the thunder loose, narrowly rescuing it from death. The experience left the thunder in a confused state of mind which lasted for seven days and nights. The emperor's officer, in rebuilding the pillar, inscribed it with the following epigraph: "Here lies Suganu who caught the thunder both in his lifetime and after his death."

This is the origin of the name, "Hill of Thunder," given in the time of the old capital.

## 2

### *On Taking a Fox as a Wife and Bringing Forth a Child*<sup>1</sup>

In the reign of Emperor Kinmei (that is, Amekuni-oshiraki-hironiwa no mikoto 天國押開廣庭命, the emperor who resided at the Palace of Kanazashi in Shikishima),<sup>2</sup> a man from Ono district of Mino province 三野國大野郡<sup>3</sup> set out on horseback in search of a good wife. In a field he came across a pretty and responsive girl. He winked at her and asked, "Where are you going, Miss?" "I am looking for a good husband," she answered. So he asked, "Will you be my wife?" and, when she agreed, he took her to his house and married her.

Before long she became pregnant and gave birth to a boy. At the same time their dog also gave birth to a puppy, it being the fifteenth of the twelfth month. This puppy constantly barked at the mistress<sup>4</sup> and seemed fierce and ready to bite. She became so frightened that she asked her husband<sup>5</sup> to beat the dog to death. But he felt sorry for the dog and could not bear to kill it.

In the second or third month, when the annual quota of rice<sup>6</sup> was hulled, she went to the place where the female servants were pounding rice in a mortar to give them some refreshments. The dog, seeing her, ran after her barking and almost bit her. Startled and terrified, she

suddenly changed into a wild fox and jumped up on top of the hedge. Having seen this, the man said, "Since a child was born between us, I cannot forget you. Please come always and sleep with me." She acted in accordance with her husband's words and came and slept with him. For this reason she was named "Kitsune" meaning "come and sleep."<sup>7</sup> Slender and beautiful in her red skirt (it is called pink), she would rustle away from her husband, whereupon he sang of his love for his wife:

Love fills me completely

After a moment of reunion.

Alas! She is gone.<sup>8</sup>

The man named his child Kitsune, which became the child's surname—Kitsune no atae.<sup>9</sup> The child, famous for his enormous strength, could run as fast as a bird flies. He is the ancestor of the Kitsune-no-atae family in Mino province.<sup>10</sup>

## 3

### *On a Boy of Great Physical Strength Whose Birth Was Given by the Thunder's Blessing*<sup>1</sup>

In the reign of Emperor Bitatsu 敏達 (that is, Nunakura-fuotamashiki no mikoto 淳名倉太玉敷命, who resided at the Palace of Osada in Iware 磐余譯語田宮),<sup>2</sup> there was a farmer in the village of Katawa in Auchi district of Owari province 尾張國阿耆知郡片藏里.<sup>3</sup> While he was working to irrigate the rice fields, it began to rain. He took shelter under a tree and stood there holding a metal rod<sup>4</sup> in his hands. When it thundered, he raised the rod in fear. At that moment the thunder struck in front of him in the form of a child, who made a

7. Folk etymology of *kitsune*, fox: *kitsu-me* 來寝 means "Come and sleep," while *ki-tsune* 來毎 means "come always."

8. In the form of a thirty-one syllable poem (5-7-5-7-7).

9. 狐直: although Kitsune no atae is not listed in the *Shinsen shōjiroku* 新撰姓氏錄, *atae* is a hereditary title conferred on the family of a local governor who was of the local gentry class.

10. For his descendant, see II.4.

1. One tale of the Venerable Dōjō cycle; see II.4, 27; quoted in the *Fusō ryakui* (III, Bitatsu), *Mizukagami* (II, Bitatsu), etc.

2. Emperor Bitatsu's palace is located in the western part of present Sakurai-shi, Nara-ken.

3. Present Furuwatari-chō, Naka-ku, Nagoya-shi 名古屋市中區古渡町.

4. 金杖: metal rod or plow (the *Fusō ryakui* gives "plow").

deep bow. The farmer was about to strike it with the metal rod when the child said, "Please don't hit me. I will repay your kindness." The farmer asked, "What will you do for me, then?" The thunder answered, "I will send you a baby to repay your kindness.<sup>5</sup> Make me a boat of camphor, fill it with water, and give it to me with a bamboo leaf on the water."<sup>6</sup> When the farmer did this, the thunder said, "Keep away from me," and it ascended to heaven in a rising mist.

Some time later a baby was born to the farmer; the baby had a snake coiled twice around his head, and the snake's head and tail hung down his back. When the child reached his teens, he heard of a man of great strength at the court, and he went to the capital, for he thought of challenging the man in a contest of strength. An unusually strong prince lived in a detached house on the northeast corner of the imperial palace grounds, where a stone eight feet square also stood. Once, the powerful prince came out, picked up the huge stone, and threw it. Then he went back into his house and closed the door to prevent people from entering. The boy<sup>7</sup> saw this, and he knew that the prince was the very man he sought.

That night the boy crept into the place and threw the stone one foot farther than the prince had. When the mighty prince discovered this, he clapped his hands to warm up, tried to throw it farther, but failed. A second time the boy threw it two feet farther, and again the prince failed. Then the boy, making footprints three inches deep, threw it three feet farther. The prince wanted to catch the boy, who was easily identified by his small footprints, but the boy ran away quickly. The prince tried to catch the boy as he was creeping out through the hedge, but he found that the boy was inside the hedge. When the prince jumped over the hedge to reach the boy, the boy was already on the other side, and the mighty prince was unable to catch him. The prince, realizing that the boy was indeed the stronger, gave up chasing him.

Some time later the boy became an acolyte<sup>8</sup> at Gangō-ji 元興寺.<sup>9</sup> At that time no night passed without some of the acolytes in service

at the bell hall being murdered. The new acolyte said to the monks at the temple, "I will put an end to these tragedies by killing the evil fiend,"<sup>10</sup> and the monks approved of his proposal. He proceeded to set four lamps and four men at the four corners of the bell hall and said to them, "When I get hold of the fiend, take the covers off the lamps." Then he hid himself at the base of the door.

At midnight the huge fiend appeared, but departed at the sight of the boy, returning again before dawn.<sup>11</sup> The boy seized it by the hair and pulled hard. The fiend struggled to extricate itself, but the acolyte pulled it into the hall. The four men at the four corners, frightened, were unable to remove the lamp covers so the boy had to light the lamps, one by one, while dragging the fiend around the hall. About dawn,<sup>12</sup> the fiend, its hair having been torn completely out, escaped. In the morning people traced the blood stains as far as the crossroads, where a wicked former slave<sup>13</sup> of the temple was buried,<sup>14</sup> and they discovered that it was the ghost of that dead man. The hair is still preserved in Gangō-ji as a treasure.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile the acolyte became a lay brother<sup>16</sup> and lived on at Gangō-ji. The temple owned some irrigated rice fields. When some princes stopped the flow of water and the fields became parched, the lay brother said, "I will irrigate the fields." The monks agreed to his plan. First, he made a plow so heavy that it took ten men to carry it. He took the plow in his hand like a cane and went to the fields, where he put it at the sluice gate to prop it open. But the princes took it away and closed the sluice gate that controlled the irrigation of the fields of the temple. Whereupon the lay brother placed at the sluice a stone so heavy that it would have required more than a hundred men to move it and proceeded to work in the fields. The princes, terrified by his great strength, did not dare to cause any more trouble. After that the fields were never dry, and they yielded good crops. The monks of the

5. 我報汝之恩; see Chap. II(2)a, for the idea of *on*.

6. In ancient Japan camphorwood was used to make boats.

7. 少子 a child between three and sixteen according to the *Ryō no gige*, "Ko-ryō," Article 6; see Sansom, "Early Japanese Law," Part Two, 135.

8. 童子 *dōji* or *waraiwa*, Skt. *kumāra*, an unordained boy under the age of twenty who works at the temple as an apprentice.

9. Originally called Asuka-dera 飛鳥寺 or Hōkō-ji 法興寺, founded by Soga no Umako 蘇我馬子 in 588 and completed in 596; it was the first temple to have a pagoda and halls and showed Korean influence, and it was moved to the capital of Nara in 716. The present Angoin 安居院 stands at the site of the original temple at Asuka-mura.

10. 鬼 *oni*, hungry ghost, one of five or six modes of existence in Buddhist cosmology. See Chap. II(2)a, n. 127.

11. 後夜 *goyā*, from three to five a.m.

12. 晨朝 *jincho*, from five to seven a.m.

13. 奴 *yakko* (*muh*): see Chap. I(1)a, n. 24.

14. There was a belief that the spirits of the dead, particularly of those who died violently, would linger in this world and cause harm to the living. In order to prevent the activities of the evil spirits, wicked people were buried at a crossroads or the end of the bridge in the hope that the pressure of heavy traffic would keep them in their graves.

15. This passage reflects a belief that anything extraordinary or strange had power and thus should be properly cared for.

16. See Chap. I(1)d, n. 92.



temple allowed the lay brother to be ordained and to renounce the world, naming him Dharmma Master Dōjō 道場法師.

This is the story of the mighty hero of Gangō-ji, renowned in later legends, whose extraordinary strength originated in the merits accumulated in his former lives. This miraculous event was witnessed in Japan.

## 4

### *On Prince Regent Shōtoku's Showing Extraordinary Signs*<sup>1</sup>

Prince Regent Shōtoku 聖德太子 was the son of Emperor Tachibana-no-toyohi 橘豊日,<sup>2</sup> who reigned at the Palace of Ikebe-namitsuki in Iware 磐余池邊磐瀨宮.<sup>3</sup> He became Prince Regent in the reign of Empress Suiko 推古,<sup>4</sup> who resided at the Palace of Owarida 小墾田. He had three names: Umayado no toyotomimi 厩戸豊聰耳; Shōtoku; and Kamitsu-miya 上宮. Since he was born in front of the stables, he was called "Umayado" [meaning "stable door"]. "Toyotomimi" [which means "intelligent ear"] originated because he was by nature so wise that he could attend to the legal claims of ten men at a time and decide them without missing a single word. He was also called "Shōtoku" [which means "sacred virtue"] because he not only behaved like a monk but was so well versed in Buddhist teachings that he could write commentaries on the *Shōman-gyō*, *Hoke-kyō*, etc.,<sup>5</sup> and so well versed in Chinese classics as to institute the system of court

ranks and honors.<sup>6</sup> He was called Kamitsu-miya no kimi [which literally means "Prince of the Upper Palace"] because his residence was located above the imperial palace.

Once, when the Prince Regent lived at the Palace of Okamoto in Ikaruga 鵜岡本宮,<sup>7</sup> he happened to go to Katoka 片岡<sup>8</sup> and, on the way, he found a sick beggar lying by the side of the road.<sup>9</sup> Alighting from his palanquin, the prince talked with the beggar, took off his cloak to cover him, and went on his way. On his return he did not see the beggar, but only his cloak hanging on the branch of a tree. The prince put it on again. One of his ministers said to him, "Are you so poor that you must wear the soiled garment once worn by a beggar?" "It's all right, you wouldn't understand," was his reply. Meanwhile the beggar died in another place. The prince sent a messenger to have him buried temporarily<sup>10</sup> while a tomb which was named Hitoki no haka 人木墓 (Man-tree-tomb)<sup>11</sup> was built for him at Moribeyama 守部山 in the northeast corner of Hōrin-ji 法林寺<sup>12</sup> in the village of Okamoto. A messenger sent to visit the tomb found it too tightly closed to allow anybody to enter. Only a poem was found at the door, and it read:

The name of my Lord  
Would be forgotten,  
Should the stream of Tomi of Ikaruga  
Cease to flow.<sup>13</sup>

6. The *Nihon shoki*, XXII (Suiko 21: 12: 1, 2); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 144–145. The difference between the *Nihon ryōkei* and the *Nihon shoki* is as follows: in the former the sage is a sick beggar while in the latter he is a starving man; in the former the poem expresses admiration for Prince Shōtoku, while in the latter it expresses grief for a dying man; in the former people do not understand what really happened, while in the latter they understand and increase their veneration of Prince Shōtoku. See Tamura Enchō, *Asuka Bukkyōshi kenkyū*, 262–278.

7. Situated in the present site of Hokki-ji 法起寺 at Okamoto, Ikaruga-machi, Ikoma-gun, Nara-ken 奈良縣生駒郡斑鳩町岡本. Cf. *Nihon shoki*, XXII (Suiko 9: 2); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 125.

8. In the vicinity of present Kaminaki-mura, Kira-kazuraki-gun, Nara-ken 奈良縣北葛城郡上牧村.

9. The *Nihon shoki*, XXII (Suiko 21: 12: 1, 2); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 144–145. The difference between the *Nihon ryōkei* and the *Nihon shoki* is as follows: in the former the sage is a sick beggar while in the latter he is a starving man; in the former the poem expresses admiration for Prince Shōtoku, while in the latter it expresses grief for a dying man; in the former people do not understand what really happened, while in the latter they understand and increase their veneration of Prince Shōtoku. See Tamura Enchō, *Asuka Bukkyōshi kenkyū*, 262–278.

10. 齋 mogari, see Chap. II(3)a.

11. The name may have originated in the preceding passage: "he could not see the beggar, but only his garment hanging on the branch of a tree," implying that the beggar had been replaced by a tree.

12. Founded in 622 by Prince Yamashiro no Ōe 山背大兄王 for his late father, Prince Regent Shōtoku, who died in 621.

13. It is one of the three funeral songs composed by Kose no Sanjō daifu 巨勢三枝大夫, according to the *Jōgū Shōtoku hō teitetsu* (DBZ, 112, 40b).

1. This tale consists of two independent stories: the first is an anecdote of Prince Regent Shōtoku; the second concerns Ensei and Gangaku, two Buddhist monks. A common structure is found in these two stories: the beggar in the first and Gangaku in the second are sages in disguise, whom Prince Shōtoku and Ensei recognized with their penetrating eyes, thereby demonstrating their own sagacity. The former is similar to a popular legend found in works such as the *Nihon shoki*, *Jōgū Shōtoku hō teitetsu*, *Jōgū taishiden hōkeisaki* 上宮太子傳補闕記, *Sanjō eketoku* (II, 2), *Nihon jōō gokurakuki*, *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XI, 1), etc. Also see Herman Bohner, "Shōtoku taishū," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasien*, XXVIII (1936).

2. Emperor Yōmei 用明 (585–587).

3. Situated in present Ikeji 池尻 and Ikeuchi 池内, Sakurai-shi, Nara-ken.

4. (592–628), Emperor Bitatsu's consort and the aunt of Prince Shōtoku, who appointed him Prince Regent in 593.

5. See Preface, n. 12, above.